

20 jobs to be created in Meath by ethnic food producer

Monday, March 30th 2015: Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Damien English TD today (Monday March 30) welcomed the announcement that a UK-based company will establish operations in Meath, creating **20 jobs**.

The jobs being created are with white-label ethnic food producers **Deko Foods Ltd**.

The company was introduced to Ireland through ConnectIreland, the company responsible for delivering the Government's *Succeed in Ireland initiative*, as part of the Action Plan for Jobs, in association with IDA Ireland. Enterprise Ireland has also been instrumental in helping the company to establish in Ireland.

Welcoming the announcement, **Minister Damien English, T.D.**, said; "I am delighted that Deko Foods has decided to establish a base in Kells. This adds to a growing number of companies who have chosen Meath to set up their business.

"This announcement is another ConnectIreland project that is being supported by the enterprise agencies and is a great example of how local communities can work to win valuable new jobs for Ireland and, in particular, regional areas throughout Ireland."

Deko Foods Ltd is a specialist white-label manufacturer catering for the Afro-Caribbean and South-American segments of the worldwide ethnic foods market. In order to meet international demand for their food and drink products, Deko Foods will establish a processing plant in Kells Business Park.

The company, which will focus on manufacturing dry, non-perishable food items at the Kells base before expanding, hopes to hire 20 employees in the coming three years. Recruitment is already underway for a number of junior positions, including full and part-time warehousing staff and administration.

Yomi Aiyegbusi, Founder and CEO of Deko Foods, said: "We chose Kells, due to its close proximity to both Dublin's seaport and airport, and also because we found a suitable premises there, ideal for our type of operation. Another incentive was the level of government support and funding provided to new businesses choosing to locate in the Kells area; it's exceptionally higher than other regions.

"I was also introduced to several other food producers and packagers in the area, all of whom assured me that Kells and its neighbouring towns could provide the necessary resources my business requires, like the right staff. I currently need to recruit an office manager, receptionist, warehouse clerk, forklift operator and four production staff.

"Ireland is perfect for us as it has a rich agricultural heritage and because of its proximity to the UK, where we have an established consumer base. Aside from its English speaking, highly literate population and its attractive tax system, another attraction was the many incentives Ireland provides to new and foreign businesses, especially those that are export-driven or invest heavily in R&D.

“As most of our revenue is generated from export sales and we invest heavily in R&D and NPD, these were significant deciding factors for us. But the ultimate deciding factor was not only Ireland’s hospitable and relaxed nature but also because Ireland is a progressive EU nation that encourages entrepreneurship and is slowly becoming a cosmopolitan hub for not only European but world business. We wished to be part of that progress.”

The company was introduced to ConnectIreland by local Meath man **Hugh Morris**. Hugh previously introduced Luxembourg-based company Mafic to ConnectIreland, and the subsequently located in Kells. Simply by striking up a conversation and asking companies to consider Ireland, Hugh has now been instrumental in securing 110 jobs for his local area.

Michael McLoughlin CEO of ConnectIreland commented: “Securing companies like Deko Foods for regional areas is testament to the great work being done by connectors right across the globe. Simply by asking the question ‘have you considered Ireland’, people like Hugh are helping to create job opportunities in their own counties. This company was considering locating in Spain until Hugh introduced them to ConnectIreland.”

This announcement brings the number of projects created in Meath by ConnectIreland under the *Succeed in Ireland* initiative to five, creating a **total of 160 jobs** in the region. Four firms have located in Kells, a fifth in Gibbstown.

Michael Cantwell, Divisional Director with Enterprise Ireland added: “This is great news for Meath and EI congratulate ConnectIreland and warmly welcome this food Foreign Direct Investment from Deko Foods. Enterprise Ireland’s Food Division will continue to work with the management as they build their manufacturing operations in Ireland.”

Register as a connector and you could earn a reward of up to €1,500 per job created (maximum 100 jobs).

-ENDS-

Editor’s Note:

About Deko Foods

Deko Foods Ltd is a specialist in the processing, manufacture and packaging of food, drink and snack products catering for the Afro-Caribbean and South American segments of the global ethnic foods market. It will produce a variety of ethnic food products including: special flour blends, rice varieties, bean varieties, oils and milks, seed varieties, speciality sauces, accompaniments, snacks, beverages, condiments, ready meals, frozen foods and savouries. The Aiyegbusi family is credited with creating and popularising a revolutionary instant flour mix for ‘Pounded Yam’, a popular dietary staple considered a delicacy across Africa. They also introduced and popularised bottled ‘Plam Wine Juice Drink’ in the European and American markets.

About ConnectIreland

ConnectIreland is an innovative way to create new jobs in Ireland by harnessing the power of your connections. The aim is to attract foreign companies that are expanding internationally to Ireland. The Irish Government will financially reward those who, through their introductions, help create new, sustainable jobs in Ireland. The programme, part of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs, is delivering the Succeed in Ireland Initiative, in partnership with IDA Ireland. www.connectireland.com.